

Why Would An Educational Institution Participate in a Regional Skills Partnership?

There are educational institutions now participating in Regional Skills Partnership; others have had active and long-term working relationships with employers that could easily form the basis for a regional skills partnership. As a general rule those educational institutions involved in these partnerships have embraced workforce development as a key component of their **educational** mission.

Why would an institution with a more traditional academic focus lead or participate in a Regional Skills Partnership? Structured correctly these partnerships may help to meet other goals of a college such as those listed below.

1. Better Opportunities And Access For Current Students.

Educational institutions have an academic responsibility for their students. This responsibility includes preparing students to use knowledge in public and private pursuits including meaningful employment. A College wants to send its graduates into the world with a strong academic background **and** a promising future. Linkages with employers offering high skilled positions in high demand occupations can assist a college better prepare its students for these occupations as well as building relationships with employers interested in recruiting graduating students.

2. Strengthened Pipeline Of Prepared Entering Students.

Some Regional Skills Partnerships are using credentialing, curriculum development, and other standards to create pathways to and through educational institutions. These pathways can begin with the K-12 system, articulate with two-year postsecondary institutions, and help lead to institutions offering advanced degrees. If these articulations are successful, postsecondary schools are able to spend their time on advanced learning rather than remedial or basic education.

3. Research Opportunities And Capacity Development.

To quickly and effectively respond to employer demand, Regional Skills Partnerships have needed to rely upon and develop flexible learning methodologies including distance learning, contextual learning, and combined curriculums. This may present educational institutions with the opportunity to study the effectiveness of these models and develop internal capacities utilizing new learning technologies. Additionally, the relationships

with employers utilizing the most current technologies and processes can enhance a college's institutional knowledge of critical science and technology applications.

4. Professional Development.

The partnerships and strategies developed through Regional Skills Partnerships can expose faculty and staff to new methods, information, and contacts. This can both deepen their understanding of a particular subject and provide staff with an exciting way of gaining knowledge through active engagement in an important community project.

5. Enhancement Of Offerings.

Similarly, Regional Skills Partnerships may be able to influence existing curriculum, internship possibilities, and other educational offerings. These direct connections with employers and the community can also create a sense in the faculty and student body that the educational institution strives to keep its offerings vibrant and connected to the new learning and new forms of learning.

6. Being A Good Neighbor.

Colleges exist in a place and most seek to be a good neighbor within their communities. Regional Skills Partnerships can offer a way of being a good neighbor through providing leadership, information, and support for community priorities in workforce and economic development.